

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE
RUTAAM AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE
USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTO 04096

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: RH/UK, OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS)
SUBJECT: OWEN/VANCE MEETINGS WITH SALISBURY EXECUTIVE COUNCIL,
APRIL 17

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

1. IN FIVE HOURS OF MEETING APRIL 17 WITH EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
(SMITH, MUZOREWA, CHIRAU AND SITHOLE) AND ASSOCIATES,
SECRETARIES VANCE AND OWEN AND AMB. YOUNG ARGUED FOR
FAVORABLE RHODESIAN RESPONSE TO OUR CALL FOR AN ALL-
PARTIES MEETING. THEY ASSERTED THAT A RONDTABLE CONFERENCE
COULD PROVIDE APPROPRIATE VEHICLE FOR REACHING LASTING
AND PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT, INVOLVING THE PATRIOTIC FRONT AS WELL
AS THE PARTIES TO THE SALISBURY AGREEMENT. US/UK SIDE ALSO
NOTED VALUE OF GETTING UNITED NATIONS INVOLVED IN THE
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SETTLEMENT EFFORT AND IN THE TRANSITIONAL PROCESS IN ORDER
TO SECURE INTERNATIONAL ACCEPTABILITY,
WHICH WOULD CONFER LEGITIMACY ON THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

2. ON THE OTHER HAND, FAILURE TO CONTINUE NEGOTIATIONS
WOULD RAISE POSSIBILITY OF ESCALATING VIOLENCE AND SOVIET/
CUBAN INVOLVEMENT. EVEN IF ALL-PARTIES CONFERENCE FAILED,

OWEN AND VANCE NOTED, SALISBURY GROUP'S WILLINGNESS TO MAKE ANOTHER EFFORT AT NEGOTIATIONS WOULD INCREASE ITS PRESTIGE AND WORLD ESTIMATION OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL. US/UK GOAL REMAINS ASSISTING RHODESIANS TO CREATE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS TO CHOOSE NEW GOVERNMENT COULD TAKE PLACE.

3. SMITH AND COMPANY PREDICTABLY PRESSED FOR UK/US SUPPORT FOR THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT, ASSERTING THAT IT FULFILLED THE DEMOCRATIC PRICCIPLES OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS AND CONCEDED TO THE AFRICANS THE MAJORITY RULE FOR WHICH THEY HAD LONG FOUGHT. ANOTHER MEETING LIKE GENEVA, THEY ARGUED, WOULD ONLY SERVE TO CONFUSE THE RHODESIAN PEOPLE, MORE THAN 80 PERCENT OF WHOM, THEY ALLEGE, SUPPORT THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT, AND MAKE THEM THINK THAT AN IRREVERSIBLE PROCESS TO MAJORITY RULE HAD NOT INDEED BEGUN. THEY SAID THAT THE US/UK SHOULD USE THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE FRONT LINE TO BRING THE PATRIOTIC FRONT INTO NEGOTIATIONS IN SALISBURY. "THE DOOR IS OPEN" THEME WAS REPEATED ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

4. WITH CONSIDERABLE BRAVADO SITHOLE ASSERTED THAT PROGRAM TO HAVE GUERRILLAS LAY DOWN ARMS WAS MEETING WITH SUCCESS AND WOULD INCREASE IN PACE AS SOON AS MECHANISMS PROVIDING ASSURED SAFE RETURN WERE PUT INTO EFFECT. AGREEING TO A MEETING WITH THE PATRIOTIC FRONT
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WOULD INHIBIT THIS PROGRAM, HE ARGUED. HE OFFERED AND OWEN ACCEPTED, TO HAVE A MEMBER OF THE BRITISH TEAM STAY IN RHODESIA TO MEET WITH SOME OF THE GUERRILLAS WHO HAVE CROSSED OVER TO HIS SIDE. AFRICAN MEMBERS OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL INDIVIDUALLY WERE EMPHATIC IN REJECTING ALL-PARTIES MEETING. SMITH SAID THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN MORALE AND CONFIDENCE OF RHODESIAN PEOPLE. HOWEVER, HE TOOK POINT ABOUT VALUE ACCEPTANCE WOULD HAVE IN IMPROVING SALISBURY'S GROUP IMAGE. WE ARE "BETWIXT AND BETWEEN," BUT, SMITH SAID, FINAL DECISION WOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT REST OF THE WORLD. IN SUM, SALISBURY GROUP AGREED TO CONSIDER SERIOUSLY THE PROPOSAL.

5. IN SEPARATE, PRIVATE CONVERSATION DAVID SMITH AND GAYLARD SAID THEY THOUGHT THAT WHILE ALL-PARTIES MEETING MAY BE PREMATURE, THEY WANTED CONTACTS TO CONTINUE AND DID NOT WANT TO SEE DOOR SHUT ON NEGOTIATIONS.

6. RHODESIANS TRIED TO PIN UK/US TO ACCEPT RESULTS OF POSSIBLE REFERENDUM WHICH THEY CONTEND WOULD DEMONSTRANT OVERWHELMING MAJORITY SUPPORT FOR THE INTERNAL SETTLE-

MENT. OWEN AND VANCE REFUSED TO MAKE ANY COMMITMENT ON THIS ISSUE. HOWEVER, REPEATED LEIT MOTIF OF OWEN'S PRESENTATION WAS THAT US/UK ARE NOT TRYING TO STOP PROGRESS OF INTERNAL SETTLEMENT. RATHER, WE WOULD URGE THEM TO GET ON RAPIDLY WITH THE PROCESS. HMG WOULD DETERMINE WHETHER ELECTIONS WERE HELD AND CONDITIONS ALLOWING FAIR TEST OF PEOPLES'S WILL, AND , IF THAT WERE THE CASE, WOULD ASSESS RESULTS TO DETERMINE WHETHER GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE WOULD BE APPROPRIAE.
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